

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 14493

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN, UK

SUBJECT: MRS. THATCHER'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS

REF: NEW DELHI 14407

SUMMARY: BRITISH CONSERVATIVE LEADER MARGARET THATCHER RECEIVED REASONABLY GOOD PRESS COVERAGE DURING HER NEW DELHI STAY. MOST OF THE CAPITAL PRESS CONCENTRATED ON HER DINNER SPEECHES AND NEWS CONFERENCE. SHE SPOKE OUT PLAINLY IN DEFENSE OF WESTERN INTERESTS, AND WARNED OF A SOVIET NAVAL BUILD UP. SHE WAS ALSO FORTHRIGHT BUT CONCILIATORY ON THE PROBLEMS OF THE INDIAN COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN. END SUMMARY.

1. MRS. THATCHER, SPEAKING AT THE DINNER GIVEN HER BY EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER CHAVAN, SAID THAT INDIA HAD ACHIEVED CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS IN TACKLING THE UNIVERSAL PROBLEMS OF RECESSION, INFLATION AND THE OIL HIKE. SHE WAS QUOTED, "IT IS SOMETIMES DIFFICULT FOR US TO APPRECIATE THE SIZE AND SCALE OF OUR PROBLEMS, AND ONLY THOSE WHO KNOW THEM FROM EXPERIENCE CAN PRESCRIBE THE REMEDIES." ON THE SAME OCCASION SHE SAID THE WAY FORWARD OFTEN IS THE ONE IN WHICH CHANGES ARE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CUSTOMS AND CONVENTIONS OF THE COUNTRY, WORKING ALWAYS TOWARDS A GOAL WHICH ACCORDS HUMAN DIGNITY AND RESPECT TO ITS PEOPLE. MRS. THATCHER ALSO SAID THE INDIAN COMMUNITY IN
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BRITAIN MAKES A REAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE LIFE OF THE NATION.

2. SPEAKING TO NEWSMEN ON THE 24TH, MRS. THATCHER DEFENDED THE DIEGO GARCIA BASE, SAYING THAT BRITAIN AND THE OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE WEST MUST BE PROPERLY EQUIPPED TO DEFEND THEIR TRADE ROUTES. SHE SAID SHE KNEW THAT INDIA WAS A NON-ALIGNED COUNTRY, BUT ADDED "I AM VERY MUCH ALIGNED." SHE ADDED SHE BELIEVED THERE WAS A SUBSTANTIAL THREAT FROM THE SOVIET UNION WHICH LED TO A QUESTION OF WHAT KIND OF RELATIONS SHE EXPECTED FOR THAT COUNTRY WERE SHE TO BECOME PRIME MINISTER. SHE SAID IT WOULD BE A THOROUGHLY REALISTIC ONE, OBSERVING THAT IT WOULD DEPEND ON WHAT SORT OF RELATIONS THE SOVIET UNION WOULD WANT TO HAVE WITH HER GOVERNMENT. SHE CITED THE SOVIET NAVAL BUILD-UP OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS, AND SAID THE SOVIET UNION WAS SPENDING 12 PERCENT OF ITS GNP ON DEFENSE. WESTERN NATIONS WOULD BE FOOLISH TO IGNORE THIS SHE ADDED.

3. THE CONSERVATIVE LEADER SAID THAT WHERE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS EXPLOITED COUNTRIES, IT WAS TOTALLY WRONG, BUT IT WAS NO EXPLOITATION, SHE SAID, IF THESE COMPANIES CREATED JOBS BY PRODUCING GOODS WHICH PEOPLE BOUGHT IN A FREE ECONOMY.

4. ON RACIAL PROBLEMS IN BRITAIN SHE SAID THAT IT WAS HER POSITION THAT ALL CITIZENS IN THE UK SHOULD BE EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW AND SHOULD ENJOY EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES. SHE ALSO SAID THAT BRITAIN HAD THE HIGHEST POPULATION DENSITY IN THE WORLD, AND THAT UNEMPLOYMENT, 6 PERCENT, WAS RATHER HIGH. PEOPLE THOUGHT MORE IMMIGRANTS WOULD COME INTO BRITAIN, AND THAT WAS A CONTRIBUTORY FACTOR OF "OUR TROUBLE", MRS. THATCHER SAID.
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